

Francis Preston Blair to Andrew Jackson, January 16, 1838, from Correspondence of Andrew Jackson. Edited by John Spencer Bassett.

FRANCIS P. BLAIR TO JACKSON.

Washington, January 16, 1838.

. . . . As usual the bullying business is begun again by the Federal Slang Whanger Wise. The Mississippi election came up to day and a motion made to print the paper of Claiborne and Gholson,¹ responsive to that of the applicants for their seats. Wise objected and said that Claiborne and Gholson ought to print it, at their own expence. Gholson who dragged himself out of a sick bed, to which he has been confined for months to be present on this occasion, observed, (as I hear) that he would not enquire from Mr. W. What it was proper for *a gentleman to do*. He was replied to by Wise that he was “ *an impudent blackguard* ”. Gholson retorted that he was “ *a damned liar, coward and scoundrel* ”. Fenton Mercer came in with his usual resolution as grand pacificator, which the House left suspended, by an adjournment. I suppose there must be a duel. Yet I do not know how Gholson can fight at present. His right arm is cramped with rheumatism, so that he cannot straighten it. He carries it continually in a sling and his fingers are so swollen and drawn up by the pain, that they are clinched in his palm and he cannot hold a pistol. You observed how Duncan of Ohio insulted Wise some time back. It would seem that he is now resenting that affront upon poor Gholson, or possibly the old grudge he bears him, for his last years pass at him. Whether Wise or Gholson challenges, however, the latter will be obliged, I suppose, to give G. time to get well or let him choose his mode of fighting, to put him on some sort of equality. At present G. is scarcely able to stand and it is the first time he has appeared in the House for months. Mr. Wright, to day reported the Bill for the severance of the Banks and Govt. It will pass I think. The Virginia Legislature is on our side in this business, in

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spite of all the efforts of Rives and Ritchie. By next week I should not be surprized if Mr. Rives, has the best evidence of this in a Resolution for a divorce.

1 John F. H. Claiborne and Samuel J. Gholson had been elected to the twenty-fifth Congress, and served from Sept. 4, 1837, to Feb. 5, 1838, when their seats were declared vacant. The apprehended duel was prevented by Calhoun and other friends.

That you may see how beautifully the old system works I send you a letter from Mr. James, of Boston. You recollect how anxiously I remonstrated against Woodburys wish to have Simpson appointed Collector. I read your letters from James, giving you his character; The poor man is dead but while in a dying state the presidents hand was filled with petitions for his appointment as Collector. If he had been appointed a year ago the Govt. losses would have been very *great* in his bank. And you see to what end the whole business of *Banks and Treasury* would have come, if you had not issued your specie order and put a close to “ *the credit system* ”. By this time if the Deposites had remained with Biddle, he would have blown up and swallowed all the millions that the states have divided among them.